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FOR INFORMATION

# REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SUMMARY

Part I of the present report summarizes the issues to which the Executive Director wishes to direct the special attention of members of the Executive Board. For the present session of the Executive Board, those issues are: (a) UNICEF goals and objectives for the mid-decade and beyond; (b) the effort to improve the management of the organization; (c) the mission statement; (d) the challenge raised by the World Summit for Social Development; (e) the ongoing priority for Africa; (f) the country strategy note; (g) UNICEF income; and (h) the fiftieth anniversaries of the United Nations and UNICEF.

CONTENTS

| | | Paragraphs | Page |
|---|---|---|---|
| I. | GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE MID-DECADE AND BEYOND ... | 1 - 2 | 2 |
| II. | STRENGTHENING MANAGEMENT IN UNICEF ..... | 3 | 2 |
| III. | A REVIEW OF THE UNICEF MISSION ..... | 4 - 6 | 2 |
| IV. | THE CHALLENGE OF THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ..... | 7 | 3 |
| V. | THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF AFRICA AND OTHER REGIONS ..... | 8 - 11 | 3 |
| VI. | FIELD COORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: THE COUNTRY STRATEGY NOTE ..... | 12 - 14 | 4 |
| VII. | UNICEF INCOME ..... | 15 | 5 |
| VIII. | THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND UNICEF ..... | 16 | 5 |

*E/ICEF/1995/13.

## I. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE MID-DECADE AND BEYOND

1. If there is any single message that should come from the 1995 annual session of the UNICEF Executive Board to the organization and its partners and allies, the UNICEF secretariat suggests that it should be a call to maintain the momentum for children that has been built up over the years during which the late James P. Grant was Executive Director. Whatever changes may occur in UNICEF leadership and management during 1995 and 1996, its goals and objectives and the broad outline of its global strategy have been set for the remainder of the decade by the Executive Board, by the World Summit for Children and by the imperatives of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and now the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) have reiterated the commitment of the international community to these goals. The Fourth World Conference on Women, scheduled to be held in Beijing, China, in September 1995, can be expected to take these commitments a stage further, with a heightened emphasis on the need for gender equity and equality and for special attention to the girl child. These are the coordinates that will keep UNICEF on course through the year 2000 and beyond.

2. More immediately, the organization's top priority through the end of 1995 is to help as many countries as possible achieve as many of the mid-decade goals as they can. At the present session, the Executive Board has before it the progress report on follow-up to the World Summit for Children (E/ICEF/1995/15), which summarizes the situation as of the beginning of 1995. That document also contains a recommendation concerning the mid-decade review of progress towards the goals of the World Summit for Children. A great deal remains to be done, but there is much to give encouragement. The momentum must not be allowed to slacken.

## II. STRENGTHENING MANAGEMENT IN UNICEF

3. The second most important priority for UNICEF in 1995 is to strengthen greatly its internal management. As stated in its initial response to the recommendations of the management review presented to the Executive Board at its second regular session of 1995 (E/ICEF/1995/AB/L.4), the UNICEF secretariat already has already found the study to be an important catalyst for change in many areas. UNICEF is committed to carrying out the changes that will be required, after due study and consultation, and with Executive Board approval, as necessary. The secretariat also is committed to pursuing the full and active involvement of UNICEF staff members and National Committees for UNICEF in this process. With the guiding support of the Executive Board, as provided in its decision 1995/12 adopted at the second regular session of 1995 (E/ICEF/1995/9 (Part II)), the UNICEF secretariat looks forward to moving ahead clearly and steadily step by step to strengthen UNICEF management in a number of basic areas.

## III. A REVIEW OF THE UNICEF MISSION

4. One of the recommendations of the management study is the call for UNICEF to clarify its overall mission and to prepare a formal mission statement. Both the Executive Board, in its decision 1995/7 (E/ICEF/1995/9 (Part I)), and the UNICEF secretariat have accepted this call. The UNICEF secretariat has already begun the process with a review of all statements by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Board that touch upon the UNICEF mandate. While the secretariat understands a mission statement to be somewhat different from one of mandate, the former clearly must be based on the latter. The secretariat looks forward to the Executive Board's consideration of the question of the UNICEF mission, including emergencies, at the present session, as decided at its second regular session of 1995 (decision 1995/12, (E/ICEF/1995/9 (Part II)). The deliberations of the Executive Board will help to guide the work of the UNICEF secretariat in preparing a mission statement for the consideration of the Executive Board at its third regular session of 1995,

as outlined in the work plan for strengthening management in UNICEF (E/ICEF/1995/AB/L.4).

5. A mission statement, in the view of the UNICEF secretariat, is a relatively concise expression, in clear, non-technical language, of what the organization is, what it seeks to achieve, how and why. A mission statement expresses an organization's collective values. It should clarify the purpose of UNICEF for persons outside the organization and also provide the basis for a more unified sense of purpose among UNICEF staff, wherever they be and at whatever level they work. Subsidiary mission statements may be prepared for different aspects of UNICEF work, as indeed the Board has requested in the case of emergency operations, but these must be prepared in close harmony and full compatibility with the organization's overall mission statement.

6. The UNICEF secretariat envisions the widest possible participation of staff and National Committees for UNICEF in the preparation of a UNICEF mission statement. The new Executive Director also should be fully in accord with the outcome. For this reason, it will take some time to reach a sufficient degree of consensus to be able to submit a draft of the mission statement to the Executive Board, but it is hoped that this may be achieved during the second half of 1995.

## IV. THE CHALLENGE OF THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

7. WSSD, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in March 1995, has provided new impetus to the work of UNICEF on behalf of children within the United Nations family, setting that work within a wider international effort towards poverty eradication and social development. After two years of systematic mobilization and persistent technical refinement, the "20/20" initiative was adopted at WSSD as a legitimate and useful instrument for guiding, assessing and monitoring overall official development assistance and national budgetary allocations to basic social programmes. The special attention of the Executive Board would strengthen the gathering support for the 20/20 initiative. WSSD also committed world leaders to develop national programmes for the eradication of absolute poverty, to make structural adjustment programmes more socially responsible, to give due recognition to the unremunerated work of women and to seek people's empowerment in the design and implementation of social development policies. Finally, it reaffirmed the goals of the World Summit for Children and the ICPD and placed them clearly within the framework of these commitments. Thus, UNICEF finds its mission and goals clearly inserted in a larger development consensus that will make teamwork within the United Nations family at the country level even more efficient and effective.

## V. THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF AFRICA AND OTHER REGIONS

8. The Board has before it a progress report on Africa (E/ICEF/1995/18), a continent which, with the least developed countries in general, was given special attention at WSSD. Despite the continuing and threatening emergencies in certain parts of sub-Saharan Africa, there are many positive developments that go almost unnoticed. Many countries are moving towards more accountable and transparent governance: over 30 countries have held elections during the past five years; freedom of the press is growing; and decentralization is bringing Governments closer to the people. In the areas of special action for children, 25 of the 46 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have either increased or sustained the immunization levels of 75 per cent or higher reached in 1990; the usage rate of oral rehydration therapy has now reached 50 per cent; salt iodization measures are being implemented in 28 of the 39 countries affected by iodine deficiency disorders; and guinea worm disease is well on the way to being eliminated from most of Africa.

9. But as more and more countries are harmonizing macroeconomic policies to meet the demands of adjustment, aid flows to Africa are declining, the debt burden has grown more onerous and per capita incomes continue to dwindle. The commitment of donors at WSSD to find development-oriented and durable solutions to external debt problems, including the cancellation of debt, and the examples set there by the Governments of Austria and Denmark, provide some hope for the future with regard to official bilateral debt. However, a breakthrough is still awaited in the realm of multilateral debt. Most worrying for children is the fact that, in many countries, primary education is stagnating or declining, leaving higher numbers and a higher proportion of children out of school. Moreover, the quality of schooling remains disastrously weak, as a special survey commissioned by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UNICEF is revealing. The question of how to achieve much greater international action in support of basic education for all children in Africa deserves the specific attention of the Executive Board.

10. UNICEF continues to advocate for a better deal for Africa on a global level and devotes some 38 per cent of its financial and human resources to sub-Saharan Africa. UNICEF continues to work through the country programme to build capacities and empower communities, families and individuals. In countries emerging from disasters, programmes will aim at strengthening local solidarity and coping mechanisms, which could become the embryo of new societies. At the national level, UNICEF is strengthening its ability to support Governments in policy areas affecting children and in mobilizing resources for children. At the same time, UNICEF is participating actively in a United Nations-wide initiative for Africa, working to strengthen country-level collaboration towards all the elements of sustainable human development, poverty reduction and accelerated economic growth.

11. The special needs of Africa and the least developed countries (LDCs) underline a more general point, i.e., that sharper differences among geographical regions of the world seem to be emerging, which UNICEF should take into greater account in its approach to programmes for children. Although it can be said that UNICEF long has made allowance for such differences through its country programme approach, there seems to be a new need to emphasize regional differences more clearly in other ways as well. This will be made a theme of region-based discussions in the months ahead, with a focus on priority problems for children and women within each region, strategies for achieving the major goals for the year 2000 and beyond, and identification of possible additional regional goals. Some of these differences might need to enter as regional dimensions of the UNICEF mission statement. The Executive Board may wish to comment on this perception and contribute to the ongoing discussion of the matter.

## VI. FIELD COORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: THE COUNTRY STRATEGY NOTE

12. The triennial policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system is under way, under the guidance of General Assembly decision 47/199 of 22 December 1992. Board members may wish to reflect on the UNICEF contribution to the process.

13. UNICEF has been a strong contributor to the preparation of country strategy notes (CSNs) in virtually all the countries that have opted to prepare one. UNICEF experience in programming, which is driven by situation analyses, has helped to guide many of the CSNs under development. For UNICEF country offices, the challenge has been to ensure that the goals and objectives of the World Summit for Children, the imperatives of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and related policies and directives of the Executive Board are reflected in CSNs. Additional challenges for countries undertaking the preparation of

CSNs include the incorporation of goals and commitments from other recent global conferences and summits into the frame of reference of the CSN and working out the national dimensions of their respective programmes of action.

14. The CSN, though useful in most developing countries, will most likely demonstrate its greatest usefulness in Africa, and LDCs in general. In those countries, where coordinating capacities tend to be more constrained, external assistance is relatively larger and the need to coordinate United Nations technical and operational support is most apparent. The CSN also provides the opportunity for organizing thematic working groups which enhance cooperation, information and programme synergy, thus helping to strengthen the resident coordinator system.

## VII. UNICEF INCOME

15. The fact that UNICEF 1994 income reached $1 billion for the first time ever is indeed gratifying. The contributions of donor Governments, especially the two largest contributors, Sweden and the United States of America, along with the contributions of National Committees for UNICEF, must be very gratefully acknowledged. Further details are given in Part II of the present report. Nevertheless, the real growth in 1994 income occurred in regular supplementary funds and emergency funds. The Executive Board may wish to consider the question of general resources, which are not growing as fast as the other types of income. While the organization is making every effort to manage more efficiently and effectively the resources entrusted to it, it is vital that general resources, the backbone of UNICEF country programmes, continue to increase.

## VIII. THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND UNICEF

16. The year 1996 will be the fiftieth anniversary of UNICEF. Plans to commemorate it are being made in the context of overall United Nations fiftieth anniversary planning, keeping the United Nations Fiftieth Anniversary Secretariat at United Nations Headquarters level, and the United Nations fiftieth anniversary focal points at the country level, well informed. The UNICEF anniversary slogan will be "Children first". The intention is to link anniversary activities with proactive measures for children that will further accelerate the achievement of goals and priorities for children. UNICEF sees its fiftieth anniversary as an opportunity to accelerate and direct activities for the benefit of children, rather than solely as a time for self-celebratory events. Anniversary activities will be supported through existing budgets, and no approval for additional funds will be sought from the Executive Board. One initiative that is well advanced is an acceleration of activities in favour of children in conflict areas on the occasion of the "Olympic Truce", as called for in General Assembly resolutions 48/11 of 25 October 1993 and 49/30 of 7 December 1994, during the Olympic Games to be held in Atlanta, Georgia (United States), from 19 July to 4 August 1996. UNICEF offices and/or National Committees for UNICEF will work with their national partners to take advantage of this opportunity to renew public commitment to the principle of "Children first". The views of Executive Board members on the fiftieth anniversary of UNICEF are most welcome, and the secretariat would like to encourage all Board members and observers to communicate with UNICEF offices and National Committees for UNICEF to share ideas and information on making the anniversary meaningful in their own countries.

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